



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Steven M. Knowles
Serial No.: 09/982,928
Filed: October 22, 2001
Title: FLEXIBLE JOINT ASSEMBLY, SERVICE, AND SYSTEM USING A
FLEXIBLE JOINT ASSEMBLY

Art Unit: 3679
Examiner: David Bochna

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
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Alexandria, VA 22314

PRE-APPEAL BRIEF REQUEST FOR REVIEW

Applicants request review of the rejections in the above-identified application. No amendments are being filed with this request.

This request is being filed with a notice of appeal.

The review is requested for the following remarks.

Claims 1, 7, 10, 12, and 41 are pending.

Rejection of claims under 35. U.S.C. §103(a)

Coutu

The Examiner has maintained his rejection of claims 1, 7, 10, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 1,914,736 to Coutu ("Coutu"). See pages 2-3 of the Office Action. Claims 7, 10, and 12 depend from independent claim 1.

The Examiner contends that "the term 'adjacent' is so broad that the thread and socket of Coutu anticipate the claim." See page 6 of the Office Action. Coutu's invention describes a retaining ring 8 that has a threadable connection on an exterior surface of a socket, which is not adjacent to the ball. See Fig. 3 of Coutu. Coutu does not teach or suggest a threadable connection to the surface of the receiving member adjacent to the central fluid connector which refers to a surface that is interior to the receiving member. See Fig. 2A of the present invention. Accordingly, Coutu does not teach or suggest a retaining ring compressing a seal by threadably connecting to a surface of the socket adjacent to the central fluid conductor and the ball in claim 1.

For convenience, Fig. 2A from the present invention and Fig. 3 from Coutu is presented below:

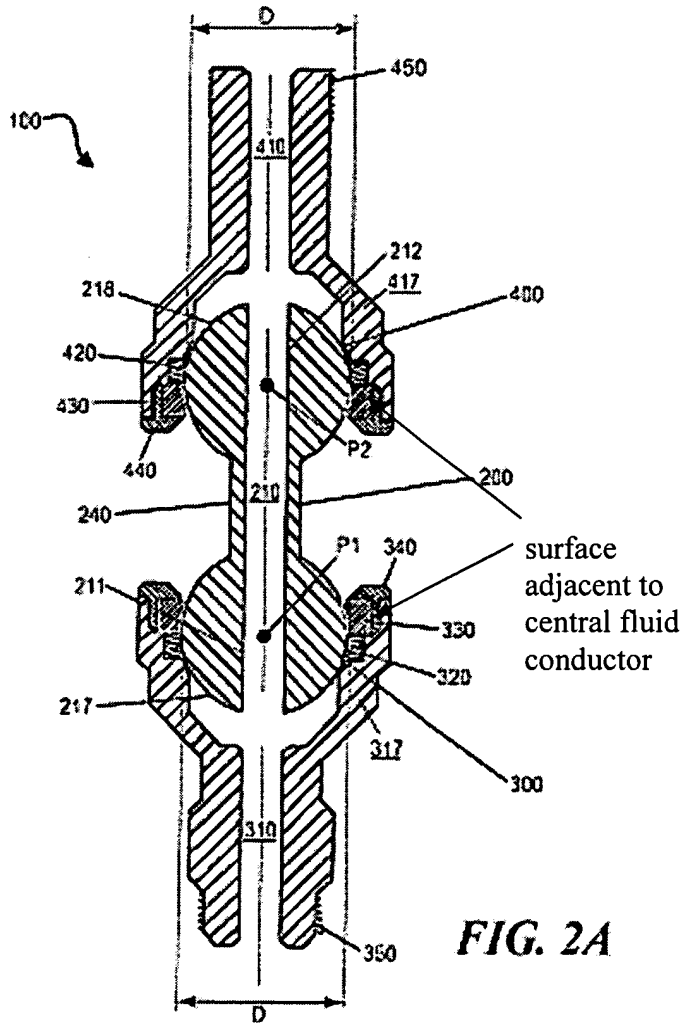
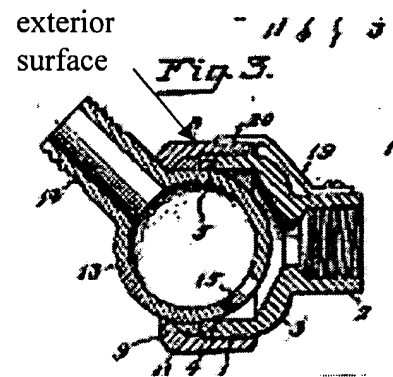


FIG. 2A

Present Invention -Fig. 2A



Coutu -Fig. 3

As such claim 1, and claims that depend therefrom are patentable over Coutu. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

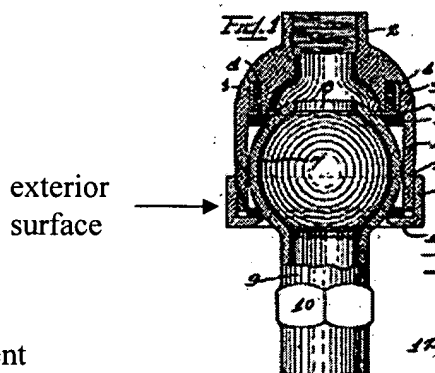
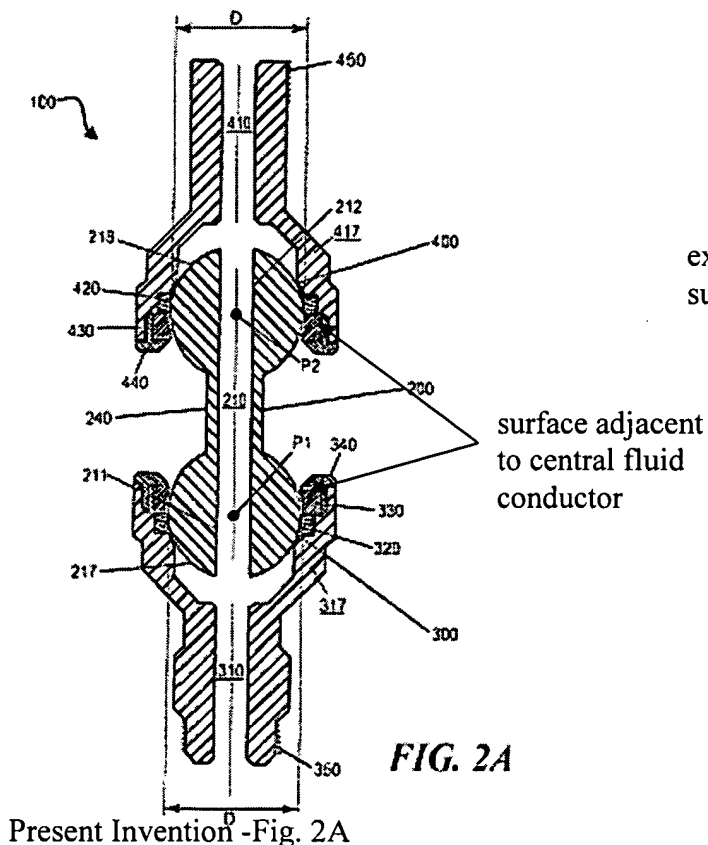
Morrison in view of Shames

The Examiner has maintained his rejection of claims 1, 7, 10, 12 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 1,532,195 to Morrison ("Morrison") in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,971,701 to Shames et al. ("Shames"). See pages 4-5 of the Office Action. Claims 7, 10, 12 and 42 depend from independent claim 1. Claim 41 is an independent claim.

The Examiner contends that "the term 'adjacent' is broad enough to be anticipated by the ring 28, socket 15 and fluid connector 22 of Morrison, which are all 'adjacent' one another as they are in radial contact with each other." See page 6 of the Office Action. Morrison discloses "an improved type of swivel joint coupling of the ball and socket construction." See page 1, lines 14-16 of Morrison. Contrary to the Examiner's assertions, Morrison discloses using a collar 12 that threadably connects to a surface opposite a fluid connector. See Figure 1 of Morrison. Morrison does not teach or suggest a retaining ring threadably connecting to a surface of the socket adjacent to the central fluid conductor. For convenience, drawings from the present invention and Morrison are presented below.

Shames does not remedy the above-mentioned defects in Morrison. Shames discloses a coupling nut 76" that threadably connects to an outer surface or exterior surface of aerator 104, which is the surface opposite to connector 102. See Figures 4 and 5 of Shames. Shames does not teach or suggest a retaining ring threadably connecting to a surface of the socket adjacent to the central fluid conductor. See claims 1 and 41.

None of the above-cited references, alone or in combination, teach or suggest the flexible joint assembly described in claims 1 and 41. Accordingly, claims 1 and 41 and claims that depend therefrom are patentable over the Morrison and Shames. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.



CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully contends that all conditions of patentability are met. Allowance of the claims is therefore respectfully solicited.

The Director is authorized to charge any fees required by the present Request to Deposit Account 19-4293.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 8-8-06

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